

ciconia and *boycciana* is that the former nest on houses, while the later on high trees.

It appears that all the species of *Ciconia* utilizes which ever is the safe site for nesting. Ours is the first record of the Woolly-necked stork nesting on cliffs. Just 300 km north of Kota, in the Keoladeo National Park near Bharatpur, this species nests on trees.

February 22, 1995

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13. GREYHEADED FISHING EAGLE, *ICHTHYOPHAGA ICHTHYAETUS ICHTHYAETUS* (HORSFIELD) FEEDING ON TURTLE

On 29 December 1994 while observing the Blacknecked stork (*Ephippiorhynchus asiaticus*) in Bankitaal of Dudwa National Park at about 1400 hr, I saw a Greyheaded Fishing Eagle (*Ichthyophaga ichthyaetus*) feeding on something on the ground fully covered by Wild-rice (*Oryza* sp). I could not properly see what it was feeding on except some red coloured material which might have been the intestine. The eagle was constantly pulling it from right to left. Later, I found that it was a turtle.

When I approached in order to collect the half-eaten turtle, the eagle flew away carrying the turtle to a nearby tree.

According to Ali & Ripley (1983), the food of

Greyheaded Fishing Eagle mainly consists of fish (exclusively) and rarely will it go for Junglefowl and smaller mammals like squirrels. Lowther (1949) reported that he saw 5 turtle shells in the nest of Pallas's Fish Eagle, *Haliaeetus leucoryphus* (Pallas), while he was photographing the nest. The Greyheaded Fishing Eagle feeding on turtle is a new record.

February 21, 1995

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14. CUCKOO (*CUCULUS CANORUS* LINN.) IN SIDHI DISTRICT, MADHYA PRADESH, INDIA

During my period of posting in Sidhi District (Vindhya Pradesh Region) of Madhya Pradesh, some interesting variations in the diet, feeding methods and, observations on the possible breeding of the

Cuckoo (*Cuculus canorus*) in that region were noticed, and are described below.

The species was sighted from May to October. The birds were seen singly, in twos and occasionally

in scattered flocks of 4 to 5 birds (24 and 26 June 1993).

Birds were more vocal during morning and evening hours and called sparsely during the day. The calls were made from perches on trees or on telegraph/electric lines and on the wing. The birds kept their wings drooping, tails partly cocked up when calling from a perch.

The longest duration of call recorded, was by a bird perched close-by, on a tree, for about 28 minutes (24 June, 1993) with three short intermissions of about 1½-2 minutes each at regular intervals. Calls were mostly heard between June to end of July. Birds sighted in some locality in early August and later, were usually silent.

Addition in Dietary and Variation in Feeding Pattern: Some variations to the diet and feeding pattern as mentioned in the HANDBOOK OF THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN (Ali and Ripley 1987, Compact Edition, pp. 231) and THE FAUNA OF BRITISH INDIA by Stuart Baker, Vol. IV, pp. 136, Ed. 1927) were observed. The species was observed hawking winged termites on 4-5 July, 1993 in the manner of flycatchers on more than two occasions. A bird perched on an electric line, passing over a field pounced on and captured a lizard about 10 cm long in its bill and carried it to nearby tree. On another

occasion a bird descended on a ploughed field, probed for food, hopped around in the manner of crow pheasants (*Centropus sinensis*).

The presence of the bird caused alarm amongst such species, as Large Grey Babblers (*Turdoides malcolmi*) and Rufousbacked shrikes (*Lanius schach*) both known as fosterer for the species (Stuart Baker, Vol. IV, p. 136) and confirmed breeders in that locality. On several occasions, they were observed harassing and driving away cuckoos. Other known foster birds, e.g. Reed Warblers (*Acrocephalus*, sp.) Chats other than Brown Rock Chat (*Cercomela fusca*), were more or less absent.

The breeding behaviour of male birds such as courtship chase of females while calling on the wing was observed several times.

The species is known to breed in the hilly regions of Central India (Stuart Baker, Vol. IV, p. 136) and recorded at Sagar, Mhow and Kamptee. The behaviour of cuckoos and reaction of possible foster species suggests breeding of the species in Sidhi District also.

April 11, 1995

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15. RANGE EXTENSION OF THE MALABAR WHISTLING THRUSH, *MYIOPHONUS HORSFIELDII* (VIGORS)

The distribution range of the species extends in the East to Chhotanagpur (Sarguja) and further to Sundergarh district (Orissa). It inhabits hill streams in dry season, but spreads into the foothills and adjacent plains in rains. The bird is also to be seen sometimes on forest paths, in gardens and compounds, (HANDBOOK Ali & Ripley, p. 598).

During my posting at Sidhi (M.P.) which has predominantly forested hilly terrain, interspersed with plains and plenty of ravines, a bird was sighted at village Karondiya on 15.10.91, around 0900 hr. perched atop a fence post, in an undulating field,

adjacent to a nallah. The size of the bird and plumage coloration matched the illustration available, thereby confirming its identification. Later, the bird moved to a nearby post, stayed for there for few seconds and then flew away.

The sighting of the species suggests extension in its distribution range up to Sidhi District also, which has suitable habitats.

January 24, 1995

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